
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6535

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Tom, Hobbs, Rasmussen, and Kohl-Welles)

READ FIRST TIME 02/04/08.

1 AN ACT Relating to teachers of visually impaired and blind birth to
2 age twenty-one public school students; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the state has
5 committed to raise the achievement of all children of Washington
6 including children with visual impairments or blindness. The
7 legislature also finds that children with visual impairments and
8 blindness can benefit greatly if they are taught by an educator who is
9 trained to understand the learning, communication, and
10 orientation/mobility issues that blind and visually impaired children
11 encounter. Individuals who receive teacher training in educating the
12 visually impaired and blind acquire strategies to assist students in
13 reacting to and interacting with their environment and reach
14 achievement levels equal to sighted children. The legislature intends
15 to take the first steps to having such an in-state teacher preparation
16 program for teachers of visually impaired and blind students by
17 assessing the needs of the state in this area.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The professional educator standards board
2 shall consider approving out-of-state institutions of higher education
3 for the purposes of establishing a specialty endorsement program. By
4 December 15, 2008, the board shall report to the education committees
5 of the legislature the process used by the board for such consideration
6 and whether the board supports approval of out-of-state institutions of
7 higher education for the purposes of establishing a specialty
8 endorsement program.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) As part of the state needs assessment
10 process conducted by the higher education coordinating board in
11 accordance with RCW 28B.76.230 and in consultation with interested
12 parties who are knowledgeable about training programs for teachers of
13 visually impaired and blind students and orientation/mobility teachers,
14 the board shall assess the need for baccalaureate and/or postgraduate
15 degree programs in Washington that specialize in teacher preparation
16 programs for teachers of visually impaired and blind students and
17 orientation/mobility teachers in Washington's preschools, and
18 elementary, middle, and high schools. If the board determines that
19 there is a need for one or more programs in Washington, then the board
20 shall encourage the appropriate institutions of higher education or
21 institutional sectors to create such a program or programs.

22 (2) By November 30, 2008, the board shall report to the legislature
23 on the needs assessment. The report shall also include a
24 recommendation on the appropriate level of one-time or start-up funding
25 to support the educator preparation program for teachers of visually
26 impaired and blind students and orientation/mobility teachers in
27 Washington's preschools and elementary, middle, and high schools.
28 Additionally, the report shall indicate which institutions or
29 institutional sectors demonstrate an interest or could be successful in
30 building and sustaining a high quality program, including which
31 institutions:

32 (a) Demonstrate the capacity to make a long-term commitment of
33 resources to build and sustain a program; and

34 (b) Can readily engage faculty appropriately qualified to develop
35 and deliver a high quality curriculum at the baccalaureate and/or

1 postgraduate level.

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